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Robe Helps Power Red Bull Batalla World Final in Colombia

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Bogotá's Movistar Arena staged the 2023 Red Bull Batalla World Final, celebrating the creativity, importance, and popularity of freestyle rap culture in Spanish-speaking communities. The event was fully loaded with energy and excitement and lit by Madrid, Spain-based lighting designer Edu Valverde from design studio Experiencias Visuales.

Edu utilized over 200 Robe moving lights to realise an eye-catching show design for the tournament which was attended live by a lively 14,000-capacity audience and streamed worldwide.

On Edu's lighting plot were 105 x Robe MegaPointes, 66 x Spiiders and 53 x BMFL WashBeams, all delivered by Bogota-based rental company, Linea Estratégica, who also take care of all things technical for the venue and were picked to deliver specific results for this spectacular show.

Edu has previously lit Red Bull Batalla tournament finals in Spain, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the previous one in Madrid, in addition to several national finals in Spain, so he knows the brief, and was very excited to be working with a great team in Colombia on this one.

The 2022 event featured an LED screen and video heavy design, so in 2023, he wanted to turn this around and produce an equally dazzling environment but this time with "light being the main protagonist".

The set design was - similar to 2022 - a collaboration between producers Babbla Studio, the Redbull Batalla team and Experiencias Visuales. A long and slightly quirky shaped runway stage allowed contestants to strut their stuff and connect with fans in the audience.

The objective was to create an atmosphere that reflected the intensity and energy of freestyle rap, explained Edu, and one of his methods was to have different lighting zones, some which were high contrast areas reinforcing the drama of stage entrances, others where the battles took place which were perfectly illuminated."

Apart from the demands of live show lighting, the multicamera shoot – directed by Paulí Subirá – and global telecast meant he had to light efficiently and effectively for camera, all the time not losing that critical connection with the audience that is so fundamental to rap shows and live broadcasts.

The distinctive runway design was fundamental to Edu's lighting strategy. His aesthetic involved two types of 'base' light, one covering access to the runways filled with harder, more dramatic key light, achieved using overhead BMFLs cutting across the runway, working in conjunction with the second, a perimeter of MegaPointes creating a 'beam corridor' matching the movement of artists as they entered the battle arena.

The 105 MegaPointes were located around the stage and the runway, and used for a myriad of dynamic effects and to emphasize key moments.

In beam mode, some defined the outline of the runway, both on the deck and from the overhead trusses creating those special kinetic effects in unison with the artists. The balance of the MegaPointes were rigged on the perimeter trusses running in spot mode, utilized to create beams with gobos and aerial movements.

The 66 Spiiders were used to enhance ambience across the bleacher seating areas and on the arena floor as well as providing general room lighting, while the BMFL WashBeams were the event's primary key lighting.

They were positioned perfectly to light the front section of the battleground and also cover the talent waiting area in addition to the runway overhead lighting.

Edu wanted these three different types of Robe fixtures for multiple reasons.

He likes BMFLs for their "uniform output and shutter system". MegaPointes he selected for their sheer versatility, adaptability, and effectiveness as both beam and spot fixtures for creating effects and textures. The high performance of the Spiiders in saturated colors and their zoom capabilities were ideal for illuminating the audience.

Before drawing up the design, he ensured that all these fixtures would be available for the show.

Linea Estratégica is well known for its quality and service for the Balatta. They supplied all the lights plus trussing / rigging, audio and a full show video package. Also being technical supplier at the Movistar Arena and very familiar with all its nuances, "everything went wonderfully smoothly," noted Edu.

Robe is one of Edu's go-to brands that he regularly requests "for its innovation, reliability, and the exceptional quality of the optics and light coming out of the fixtures, all aspects that are crucial in live events."

Among the biggest challenges of lighting this event was adapting the rig to the unique design of the stage and synchronizing with all the fully improvised performances which kept everyone on the edge, proving a great test of their imaginative agility, rhythmic and technical skills!

On top of that, creating an atmosphere suitable for both broadcast and live performance was a "significant challenge," recalls Edu.

The get-in and set up time was tight, with only two overnight onsite programming sessions which were intense. However, good advance planning and the magic and convenience of visualization using WYSIWYG and Depence3 enabled Edu to leave Madrid with the building blocks already programmed, so on site in Bogota, the focus was on tidying up and finessing.

For him, the most interesting part of the project was creating a unique atmosphere to complement the vibe, vibrance and spontaneity of freestyle, keeping the focus on the artists.

"You use both organization and flexibility to tune in to the performances unfolding onstage in front of you," said Edu, adding that a "harmony and understanding of freestyle culture also helps this process."

Audience LED wristbands were also integral to the overall illuminated effects, providing a very homogeneous yet dynamic and constantly changing background.

Edu worked alongside a highly talented team including three production managers - Javier Svietozar (Red Bull), Enrique Garcia (Babbla Studio) and Yalesa Echevarría from local company Duir - plus Fabio Cuellar from Linea Estratégica; lighting operator David Carrasquillas, lighting programmer Juan Manuel Lazaro, sound engineer Felipe Lara and video content director Jaime Dusan from Nativo.

"The team was amazing! The local production and technical crews worked tirelessly and were super professional, throughout all the months planning and leading up to the setup and show. AND, the passion and enthusiasm of the Colombian audience added another fantastic and very memorable dimension to the event."

The Batalla World Final 2023 was enjoyed by peak audiences of over 850,000 people tuning in to the livestream broadcast to share the action-packed series of thrills happening in the Movistar Arena.

The tournament's many highs included a rap-off between the then reigning – and only three times – champion Aczino and popular challenger Chuty who emerged as the eventual Red Bull Batalla 2023 winner after a final battle with Fat N that saw both artists delivering incendiary performances!

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